

29 November 2017

Auckland DHB  
Chief Executive's Office  
Level 1  
Building 37  
Auckland City Hospital  
PO Box 92189  
Victoria Street West  
Auckland 1142

**Re Official Information Request for chemotherapy, funding of chemotherapy drugs, and Herceptin treatment in breast cancer patients**

I refer to your Official Information Act request of 1 November 2018 to the Auckland DHB and, as the Regional Cancer & Blood Services at Auckland DHB, the transfer from Waitemata DHB on 1 November 2018 and the Counties Manukau DHB 5 November 2018 for the following information:

- 1. *how many rounds of chemotherapy a patient is entitled to under the DHB***  
***NB: If this differs between cancers please outline this - otherwise I am specifically asking about breast cancer patients***
- 2. *what chemotherapy drugs the DHB is funded for, broken down by drug and length of treatment a patient is entitled to***

In addition, Waitemata DHB (5 November 2018) and Counties Manukau DHB (5 November 2018) transferred the third part of your OIA request to Auckland DHB and we have responded accordingly.

- 3. *\*the number of herceptin treatments in breast cancer patients under the DHB each year, from January 1 2008 - to Nov 1 2018***

The information you have requested is as follows:

***Question 1: How many rounds of chemotherapy a patient is entitled to under the DHB***

There are no limitations on the number of "rounds" of chemotherapy offered a patient. Chemotherapy is mostly protocol-driven and based on clinical trial evidence. The protocol may define the number of doses/cycles, but not the number of 'rounds.'

There are no restrictions or limits on the number of treatments. Protocols will differ between different cancer types and within the different stages of a cancer type.

***Question 2: What chemotherapy drugs the DHB is funded for, broken down by drug and length of treatment a patient is entitled to***

Pharmac approves funding of drugs and the list is publicly available at their site <https://www.pharmac.govt.nz/tools-resources/pharmaceutical-schedule/>

**Question 3: The number of herceptin treatments in breast cancer patients under the DHB each year, from January 1 2008 - to Nov 1 2018**

The number of appointments to administer Herceptin treatments for breast cancer patients is as follows:

**Herceptin volume by DHB of domicile & Breast Tumour stream**

DHB of Domicile	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Auckland	331	535	606	538	544	748
Counties Manukau	453	450	573	696	714	790
Waitemata	487	534	546	620	857	826
Northland	18	60	53	3	12	16
Other	19	33	39	26	39	8
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1308</b>	<b>1612</b>	<b>1817</b>	<b>1883</b>	<b>2166</b>	<b>2388</b>

Note: The listing of Herceptin volumes into tumour streams is taken from the assessment appointments.

*By way of caution, we note that using raw data that is unadjusted for variables of population and demographic factors is potentially misleading. Therefore, we advise caution in attempting to use the data provided in the table to compare outcomes between DHBs and services. We advise that information and data provided here has been specifically prepared in response to the questions asked, to be used only for its intended purpose, and is covered by the Privacy Act and CM Health policy.*

I trust this information answers your questions.

You are entitled to seek a review under the Official Information Act section 28(3) of the response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Auckland DHB website.

Yours faithfully



Ailsa Claire, OBE  
Chief Executive